
The Building Partner Capacity Imperative

By

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We have learned that we cannot live alone at peace. We have learned that our own well being is dependent on the well being of other nations far away. We have learned to be citizens of the world, members of the human community.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt

The United States faces a “diverse set of security challenges”¹ and a “wider range of adversaries” than any time in recent history.² The international environment is characterized by significant instability, insecurity, and uncertainty and America faces substantial strategic challenges as it attempts to maintain an effective international presence in such an environment while facing mounting resource constraints. Thus, American leaders must balance national desires, responsibilities, and ideals to meet America's strategic ends while harmonizing the ways and means at their disposal. This task is especially difficult in a complex international context.

Challenges in the international environment derive partly from significant insurgent activity and the corresponding weakening of nation states. The aim of an insurgency is “the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict.”³ This threat is formidable with insurgencies threatening approximately half the globe while weakening nations and creating regional instability.⁴ American leaders desiring to maintain a substantial international presence must recognize that U.S. interests are best served when countries are internally secure from this insurgent threat and regions are stable.⁵

As opposed to stable countries, nations weakened by insurgencies threaten to prompt spreading insecurity, especially in a global environment no longer constrained by the bipolar conflict of the Cold War. American leaders recognize that weakened nations are a threat.⁶ In fact, strong states no longer pose the greatest threat to international security, weak states do.⁷ Internal problems within weakened states do not often remain internal, and instead, spread outside of political borders, destabilizing a

1. Donald Rumsfeld, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, March 2005), i.

2. General Richard B. Myers, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2004), 4.

3. Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 17 October 2007, 267.

4. Robyn Read, “Irregular Warfare and the United States Air Force: The Way Ahead,” *Air and Space Power Journal* (Winter 2007), 49.

5. Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 2-3. *Irregular Warfare*, 1 August 2007, 53.

6. Rumsfeld, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, 1.

7. “On the Brink: Weak States and US National Security,” (Washington, DC: Center for Global Development, June 8, 2004), 12.

weak state's neighbors and even entire regions. Furthermore, these problems breed violence, disease, instability, criminal activity, and further insurgency.⁸ A United States concerned with spreading peace, security, and democracy should not allow lawless sanctuaries to threaten American strategic interests.

An additional threat created by insurgencies is that they foster conditions conducive to terrorism. US policy indicates that this threat has become the nation's highest priority,⁹ as the growth of global terrorism degrades the stability and security of the United States and its allies.¹⁰ A state weakened by insurgency offers terrorists places to hide, train, plan, and operate. America must pursue solutions to preempt and mitigate these threats in order to achieve U.S. national security objectives and uphold international commitments. America ignores these substantial threats "only at its own peril."¹¹

Current international challenges differ from those for which the DOD has traditionally prepared.¹² Unconventional problems require unconventional solutions, which the US military is not properly organized, trained, or equipped to face. Insurgencies and terrorism do not primarily pit military forces against each other on the battlefield. Instead, victory can only be achieved on a different battlefield, one upon which legitimacy, influence, and popular support are the decisive elements.¹³ American strategic guidance recognizes the importance of building partnership capacity as a way to overcome these current challenges and to meet American strategic objectives in a resource constrained context.

Strategic guidance details America's commitment to international engagement. U.S. national leaders recognize the need for partners as necessary elements of international security and stability.¹⁴ In fact, building partnership capacity is considered an indispensable element of American policy,¹⁵ especially in a world in which America faces growing demands and shrinking resources.¹⁶ If building partner capacity is as important as strategic guidance dictates, then it must be properly understood and applied. Building partnership capacity, defined as "targeted efforts to improve the collective capabilities and performance of the DOD and its partners,"¹⁷ can greatly improve the American strategic position while adhering to global commitments and limitations.¹⁸ Security cooperation and foreign internal defense (FID) programs are important components of building partnership capacity and should be designed to supplement and complement each other.

8. "On the Brink," 5, 7.

9. *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office), 361.

10. Lt Gen Michael W. Wooley, *Aviation Foreign Internal Defense Mission Area: Execution and Planning Roadmap* (Hurlbert Field, FL: Air Force Special Operations Command, February 2007), 2.

11. Alan J. Vick et al., *Air Power in the New Counterinsurgency Era: The Strategic Importance of USAF Advisory and Assistance Missions* (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 2006), 3.

12. Donald Rumsfeld, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, February 6, 2006), A-7. This appendix was written by General Richard B. Myers.

13. AFDD 2-3, *Irregular Warfare*, 48.

14. Rumsfeld, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, 8, 19, 22. Rumsfeld, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, 17, 20.

15. Rumsfeld, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, 83. This is especially true in the shaping phase of operations.

16. President George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, March 2006), 49.

17. AFDD 2-3, *Irregular Warfare*, 27.

18. Rumsfeld, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, 18.

Security cooperation and FID are critical tools for meeting American national security objectives. Security cooperation encompasses “all Department of Defense interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific U.S. security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation.”¹⁹ According to the *National Defense Strategy*, security cooperation is “one of the principle vehicles for strengthening alliances and partnerships” in place of a global U.S. military presence.²⁰ FID, in contrast, is defined as “participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.”²¹ Thus, FID activities support “the host nation’s program of internal defense and development.”²² These building partner capacity tools, which are based on international relationships, can help meet American national security objectives, improve international perception about the United States, render reactive military intervention less likely, and develop more effective intervention if needed. Ultimately, such programs further America’s ability to impact the entire “human community” while adhering to a variety of international and domestic constraints.

Relationships and Building Partner Capacity

Relationships are the fundamental component of building partner capacity programs. Military policy already recognizes that “interpersonal relationships built through sustained interaction with the populace and partner operations with indigenous forces are critical” to success.²³ Meaningful international relationships create avenues of American influence on foreign partners, enhance unity of effort, foster trust, and develop effective communication and intelligence. These important characteristics of properly developed relationships form the foundation for effective international engagement.

When facing an insurgency, the primary objective is to “foster development of effective governance by a legitimate government.”²⁴ This legitimacy is often gained by increasing a government’s ability to maintain security and address the grievances of the population. Importantly, the host nation population defines “effective and legitimate governance.”²⁵ Therefore, host nationals need to be a substantial part of the solution; in fact, they need to be the most substantial part. Host nation self-sufficiency and legitimacy requires countries to respond primarily on their own, as “foreign forces cannot defeat an insurgency; the best they can hope for is to create the conditions that will enable local forces to win it for them.”²⁶ This is largely because a sizable foreign force can counterproductively decrease a host nation’s legitimacy in the eyes of the local population. Therefore, a smaller foreign military contingent is often more acceptable to host nation populations than a larger one.

19. Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 484. This term has replaced old terms such as “peacetime engagement” and “mil-to-mil programs.”

20. Rumsfeld, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, 19.

21. Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 214.

22. Joint Publication 3-07.1, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense* (FID), 30 April 2004, I-1, xi.

23. AFDD 2-3, *Irregular Warfare*, 11.

24. Army Field Manual 3-24 (Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5), *Counterinsurgency*, 1-21.

25. Army Field Manual 3-24 (Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5), *Counterinsurgency*, 1-21.

26. John A Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), xiv.

Host nation governments are far more capable at handling their internal problems than foreign forces. Partner nation personnel, for example, have better knowledge of language, geography, and culture. They understand tribal loyalties, recognize family relationships, and have an innate understanding of local patterns of behavior. In addition, host nation populations have the ability gain information and intelligence far easier than outsiders.²⁷ Ultimately, locals have a better knowledge of prevailing conditions and are more effective at fighting against insurgent and terrorist threats.²⁸ This superior local knowledge goes a long way to enabling and empowering professional local forces to provide security and legitimacy and erode support for insurgents. Counterinsurgency operations require “a full appreciation of the adversary’s strengths, weaknesses, and goals”²⁹ in accordance with Sun Tzu’s admonition that one must understand the enemy to succeed.³⁰ There is no one more capable of understanding a local enemy than the host nation forces, and military relationships can create avenues of influence to improve capabilities and align efforts with American interests.

Relationships build the potential for influence. Engagement with host nation leaders enables the United States to “positively influence the development of foreign military institutions and individuals” and spread American ideals.³¹ Building partnership capacity can help improve the professionalism of host nation military forces through mentoring, training, and education. Host nation forces that are properly trained, equipped, and empowered by security cooperation and FID programs can develop the capability to effectively handle internal problems and further increase their legitimacy. Additionally, influential military relationships allow American leaders and their partners to mutually “shape the strategic landscape, protect shared interests, and promote stability.”³²

Building partner capacity can also help create conditions that enable unity of effort among the United States and its global partners. Relationships, built through military cooperative activities, are the first important step in creating such unity. Security cooperation and FID are both primarily about partnering with other nations, and the resultant relationships form the foundation for unified action based on common and understood mutual interests. In fact, Edward Murrow, famed journalist and grandfather of American strategic communication, contended that face-to-face relationships are the most important aspect of building trust, cooperation, and unity. He suggested that it was in these “last three feet” that national programs became personally cemented through understanding and cooperation.³³ T. E. Lawrence also recognized that his relationships directly translated into positive foreign opinions of the British government and broader international ties.³⁴ Relationships can also lead to harmony of action and effort.³⁵ As an example, strong relationships assist in achieving a desired end state of U.S. counter-terrorism policy by working with other nations and employing complementary

27. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, xiv.

28. Rumsfeld, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, 23.

29. Vick et al., *Air Power in the New Counterinsurgency Era*, 32.

30. Sun-tzu, *The Art of War*, ed. and trans. Ralph D. Sawyer and Mei-chün Lee Sawyer (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 179.

31. *Foreign Military Training: Joint Report to Congress, Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007*, (Washington, DC: US Department of State, 2007).

32. “Foreign Military Training: Joint Report to Congress, Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007.”

33. Mark Betka, “Edward R. Murrow: A Life,” in *Edward R. Murrow: Journalism at Its Best*, ed. George Clark, <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/murrow/murrow.pdf> (accessed 28 April 2008), 2. By the “last three feet” Murrow was referring to personal, face-to-face interaction. He believed that messages were only truly understood and well-received once they were transmitted through this level of interaction.

34. T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph* (New York: Anchor Books, 1991), 25.

35. Rumsfeld, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, 78.

capabilities to counter sponsorship, support, and sanctuary for terrorist organizations.³⁶ Finally, relationships are important because they help convey U.S. interests and promote an understanding of American values.³⁷ Such understanding demystifies American intentions, makes actions of the United States more transparent, and increases American trustworthiness.

American programs that engage with foreign military organizations can also foster an increased level of trust. Security cooperation and FID programs are aimed at “building trust and confidence between the United States and its multinational partners.”³⁸ Properly designed programs to build partner capacity accomplish this because they are based on cooperative activity. Militaries working together, even through small projects, can build important foundations for greater cooperation in the future. Exercises, combined training, and advice intertwine foreign militaries with the United States and demonstrate mutual reliability and commitment. This is especially true of those engagement activities that clearly benefit a host nation by improving its capabilities.

Relationships also create avenues of communication that can increase intelligence critical to a wide variety of American national security interests. Security partnerships are vital because they can provide unique access to information that would otherwise not be available.³⁹ American leaders recognize the importance of intelligence, stating that it “directly supports strategy, planning, and decision-making.”⁴⁰ Relationships, cemented through security cooperation and FID programs, can provide sources of intelligence that can “improve our capacity for early warning” and enhance the American strategic position.⁴¹ Well-grounded, long-term relationships improve communication that can meet these strategic intelligence needs. Furthermore, security cooperation and FID enhance the ability to “pinpoint the host country’s needs and capabilities” to most effectively and efficiently apply American resources.⁴²

Meeting National Security Objectives

Building partnership capacity and utilizing the important relationships described above are critical elements of executing national security strategy.⁴³ In fact, security cooperation and FID are considered “indispensable elements of the [DOD’s] mission”⁴⁴ and are the “principle means of defense engagement with our international partners and allies.”⁴⁵ By developing foreign military institutions and forming strong international relationships, the American military can empower and equip host nation forces to counter destabilizing influences. Of course, these efforts must be carefully applied to only strengthen those regimes that align with American interests and values. However, a partner capacity program can be carefully crafted in those nations divergent from American values with an emphasis on reforming institutions and shaping values by utilizing influence gained through

36. Myers, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America*, 10-11.

37. Rumsfeld, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, 91.

38. Myers, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America*, 12.

39. General Richard B. Myers, *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, February 1, 2006), 1.

40. Rumsfeld, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, 15.

41. — — —, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, 15.

42. David J. Dean, *The Air Force Role in Low-Intensity Conflict* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1986), xiv.

43. *Foreign Military Training: Joint Report to Congress, Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007*.

44. *Department of Defense QDR Execution Roadmap, Building Partnership Capacity*, May 2006, 5.

45. Lt Gen Jeffrey B. Kohler, “Defense Security Cooperation Agency Worldwide Conference,” presentation, 27 March 2006. Lt Gen Kohler was the Director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency from 2004 to 2007.

relationships and engagement. Thus, building partner capacity can be used in a variety of situations to pursue American objectives.

The most important national security priority for the United States is the global war on terrorism and building partnership capacity is a critical element in this international struggle. In fact, national leaders consider building partnership capacity essential because America cannot win the war on terror on its own and success can only be achieved “with the help of friends and allies.”⁴⁶ Thus, American resources, foreign capabilities, and the global terrorist threat demand a unified effort established through meaningful relationships. Security cooperation and FID help provide and promote the collaborative efforts that form the foundation for countering extreme terrorist ideology. National security documents describe such collaboration as a necessary element in the strategy against global terrorists because the complex international environment demands the complementary efforts of many nations.⁴⁷

Building partnership capacity and forming strong relationships can also assist in efforts to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), which are considered the greatest threat to U.S. national security due to their potentially catastrophic effects.⁴⁸ Security cooperation and FID develop trusting relationships that provide broader, deeper, more flexible, and more effective conditions than the traditional tools of nonproliferation diplomacy alone.⁴⁹ In fact, established relationships open up potential avenues of communication to provide intelligence about WMD. Additionally, improved partner capacity strengthens host nations to combat WMD within their own borders and as part of regional and global coalitions against proliferation. The potential of partnership capacity to help to mitigate this threat further enhances the importance of such programs.

Building partnership capacity can help partner nations to “reach a sustainable path to peace, democracy, and prosperity” while instilling American values through relationships and military institutions.⁵⁰ This enhanced partner capacity can help improve host nation capabilities to deny terrorists sanctuary, disrupt terrorism, enhance regional security and stability, and defeat insurgencies.⁵¹ Importantly, the sustainability of this path is relevant to host nations and the United States. International influence and capacity building make the most of limited American resources in an international environment where threats are complex, multifaceted, unexpected, and global in nature. Developing self-sufficiency allows nations to assist America by leveraging their capabilities instead of relying solely on American capabilities.

Improving International Perception

Strong programs of international engagement could also enhance world opinion about America, offering tremendous opportunities to “portray U.S. support in a positive light.”⁵² After all, such

46. Myers, *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism*, 1. Douglas J. Feith, “Transformation and Security Cooperation,” remarks in Washington, DC, 8 September 2004, <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=145>.

47. — — —, *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism*, 5.

48. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 19.

49. Stephen Rademaker, “Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction and Terrorism through Security Cooperation,” *DISAM Journal* (2006), 49-50. Stephen Rademaker was the Acting Assistant Secretary of State, International Security and Nonproliferation.

50. President George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (Washington, DC: The White House, September 2006), 16.

51. Wooley, *Aviation Foreign Internal Defense Mission Area: Execution and Planning Roadmap*, 2.

52. Joint Publication 3-07.1, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense (FID)*, I-4.

assistance is designed to improve stability and security within the host nation. Thus, security cooperation and FID programs are designed to help partner nations help themselves. Host nation citizens benefiting from such programs would have the opportunity to see the first-hand results of American generosity that could improve their perception of American policies and help them become advocates of America instead of opponents. American leaders could harness this international goodwill to further strategic objectives. However, [some believe] recent American policy has eroded, not enhanced, international goodwill.

America faces a distinct international perception problem. Support for the United States has sharply declined in recent years and at least half of the international community believes that America is “playing a mainly negative role in the world.”⁵³ This decline in international perception has largely been due to a distinct distrust about American foreign policy aims since the initiation of Operation Iraqi Freedom.⁵⁴ Much of the world has viewed American actions in the international arena as narrow, myopic, unilateral, imperialist, and hypocritical; the rush to war in Iraq has symbolized to many an American propensity to impose its will on others even under questionable pretenses.⁵⁵ While many admire American freedom and prosperity, a large portion of the international community sees America as a powerful force that fails to seek positive engagement in favor of military coercion. Such perception can create significant strategic problems for the United States.

A poor international perception of America can help foster terrorism and its associated global insurgency. Such anti-Americanism has already increased recruitment for terrorist organizations as an avenue to oppose the United States.⁵⁶ By alienating the international community through its unilateral, heavy-handed policies, American actions have inspired terrorist organizations and buttressed their support.⁵⁷ A negative world perception about America can foster terrorism by helping these violent organizations gain support, resources, and fervency; strengthening their violent nature; encouraging their radical ideology; and refining terrorist objectives in opposition to America. American programs and policies that may actually strengthen terrorist organizations are highly counterproductive to America’s top national security objective.⁵⁸ Decreasing anti-American sentiment and carefully building international cooperation and trust would better align with national security aims.

A waning international perception of the United States can also create additional difficulties for American foreign policy that relies heavily upon coalitions to further its policies and objectives. However, as anti-Americanism increases the United States finds itself less able to attract coalition partners and this “can affect the success or failure of initiatives.”⁵⁹ According to the Center for

53. *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 375. Richard L. Armitage and Jr. Joseph S. Nye, “CSIS Commission on Smart Power: A Smarter, More Secure America,” (Washington, DC: The Center for Strategic and International Studies Press, 2007), 17. This finding is echoed in “Conflicting Views in a Divided World,” (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2006), 3.

54. Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 91, 133, 38.

55. Joseph S. Nye Jr, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 61, 64, 127, 44.

56. Nye Jr, *Soft Power*, 127.

57. Christopher C. Harmon, “What History Suggests About Terrorism and Its Future,” in *The Past as Prologue: The Importance of History to the Military Profession*, ed. Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 219.

58. *Finding America’s Voice: A Strategy for Reinvigorating US Public Diplomacy*, (New York: Council of Foreign Relations, 2003), v.

59. Peter G. Peterson, “Privatising US Public Diplomacy,” *The Financial Times*, 21 January 2004. http://www.cfr.org/publication/6697/privatising_us_public_diplomacy.html?breadcrumb=%2Fissue%2Fpublication_list%3Fid%3D5. Peter G. Peterson, “Public Diplomacy and the War on Terrorism,” *Foreign Affairs* (Sept/Oct 2002), 77. Peter Peterson was the Chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Strategic and International Studies, “there is little question that America’s diminished standing abroad has meant that the United States has had increased difficulty in accomplishing its goals.”⁶⁰ If this is true, then a lack of positive international engagement has made American foreign policy doubly counterproductive by reducing allies and increasing enemies. As an example, the Turkish government’s decision to deny the American military’s use of its territory as a staging ground for the 2003 invasion of Iraq was a partial reflection of Turkish public opinion about America at the time.⁶¹ This single decision, rooted in international perception of the United States, had significant consequences on the conduct of the war and the post-war stabilization effort. This situation stands in direct contrast to the positive perception of the United States in Turkey in 1999, shortly after American intelligence led to the capture of a notorious Kurdish terrorist Abdullah Ocalan, and subsequent use of Turkish airspace that had been otherwise restricted. American leaders must understand this close association between positive international perception and global influence.

Building partnership capacity through a more robust program of security cooperation and FID is a way to help build relationships that enhance international perception about America. It would do so through stronger international cooperation and trust, more integrated unity of effort, and improved individual relationships that could translate into improved international attitudes. Embarking on a “process of practical engagement” is a good step toward swaying international opinion in favor of the United States and winning international hearts and minds.⁶² Ultimately, these programs “multiply U.S. influence globally” by engaging with host nations in military partnerships and striving to overcome negative international perceptions about America.⁶³ Such characteristics of a program to build partnership capacity would strive to mitigate anti-Americanism and improve American trustworthiness in order to erode support for global terrorism, increase America’s ability to attract international partners, and improve American influence. Such an emphasis stands in sharp contrast to strong military action that often alienates instead of attracts international partners.

Decreasing the Likelihood of Military Conflict

Building partnership capacity and enhancing international relationships is preventative in nature. The intent of programs to build partnership capacity is “to assist a [host nation], if possible, in anticipating, precluding, and as a last resort, countering an internal threat.”⁶⁴ Such precautionary strategies “offer many advantages over the remedial approach.”⁶⁵ As preventative efforts, building partnership capacity programs can be more efficient and effective than reactive efforts by achieving the same goals with fewer assets and less commitment.⁶⁶

The American military faces personnel and budgetary constraints forcing it to find ways to achieve its broad strategic objectives in a cost effective manner. Security cooperation and FID can be efficient because of their preventative nature; “these relatively small investments often produce results that far exceed their cost.”⁶⁷ The first reason security cooperation and FID are cost effective is because these

60. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, *CSIS Commission on Smart Power*, 17-19.

61. While there are several factors that contribute to such an international decision, public opinion was undoubtedly a major factor.

62. Abdelwahab El-Affendi, “The Conquest of Muslim Hearts and Minds? Perspectives on US Reform and Public Diplomacy Strategies,” (Washington, DC: The Brookings Project on US Policy Towards the Islamic World, 2005), 10.

63. AFDD 2-3.1, *Foreign Internal Defense, Foreword*.

64. AFDD 2-3.1, *Foreign Internal Defense, Foreword*, III-1.

65. Vick et al., *Air Power in the New Counterinsurgency Era*, 72.

66. Paul Marks, “Peacetime Engagement: A Role for Military Advisors?,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* (Spring 2000), 104. Paul Marks was a military advisor to the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces.

67. Myers, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America*, 12.

programs train others to maintain their own security and stability. Training strives to create effective host nation forces that can tackle their own internal problems without the need for continued massive American support. These indigenous forces are far less costly to America than inserting US forces. Thus, well-trained host nations are able to “share the risks and responsibilities of today’s complex challenges.”⁶⁸

The second reason security cooperation and FID are cost effective is because they handle problems before they spiral out of control. American leaders recognize that “it is much more cost-effective to prevent conflicts than to stop conflicts once they have started.”⁶⁹ In fact, a RAND corporation study assessed that “many precautionary interventions can be carried out for the price of a single remedial one.”⁷⁰ Admittedly, such a broad program of international engagement would require military personnel stationed around the world in a security cooperation role because it is impossible to determine the next location that prevention would be necessary, undoubtedly resulting in some inefficiency in the allocation of resources. However, the benefits of strengthened relationships and international perception of America would offset some of these costs. Additionally, a recent RAND study indicates that the cost savings in preventing problems instead of intervening when the problems have expanded is so substantial that such programs are worth it even if they prevent an American intervention in a single major conflict.⁷¹

Preventative and proactive strategies can yield more effective results as well when combined with appropriate political aims and integrated into a unified effort enhanced through meaningful relationships. “It is preferable for the United States to involve its military instruments as early as possible” and this is exactly what security cooperation and FID strive to accomplish.⁷² Such programs meet strategic objectives by countering threats close to their source, both in time and distance. In addition, U.S. military forces are able to observe problems at their outset and quickly react as they witness the signs of impending insecurity and instability. In fact, countering threats early makes success against them much more likely.⁷³ Preventative programs can stop problems early when they are easiest to control and when insurgencies are the most vulnerable.⁷⁴ Intervening early prevents “problems from becoming crises and crises from becoming conflicts,”⁷⁵ and helps prevent unstable nations from degenerating into weak or failed states.⁷⁶ Thus, preventative action can influence events before they become more challenging.

Legitimacy in the eyes of the local population is the key concern in many host nations and building partnership capacity programs have the potential to enhance it through American influence. This makes such programs more suitable to the particular types of conflicts with which they are involved.

68. Rumsfeld, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, 88.

69. Gregory Dyekman, *Security Cooperation: A Key to the Challenges of the 21st Century*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 2007), 1. This quote is from General James L. Jones, Commander of the US European Command.

70. Vick et al., *Air Power in the New Counterinsurgency Era*, 72. RAND compares a Joint Combined Exchange Training exercise (\$500,000), the Georgia Train and Equip Program (\$64 million), El Salvador (\$1 billion and 20 US soldiers dead), Operation Iraqi Freedom (\$292 billion and 2,531 US soldiers dead as of June 30, 2006), and Vietnam (\$500-600 billion and 58,000 US soldiers dead). The preventative military actions analyzed in this study were found to be substantially less costly.

71. — — —, *Air Power in the New Counterinsurgency Era*, 92.

72. — — —, *Air Power in the New Counterinsurgency Era*, 92.

73. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, 37.

74. Regis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution? Armed Struggle and Political Struggle in Latin America* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books Ltd., 1967), 61-62.

75. Rumsfeld, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, 17.

76. Marks, *Peacetime Engagement: A Role for Military Advisors?*, 104.

“The essential aim of preventative involvement is to increase the basic functioning and capacity of partner nation’s military institutions.”⁷⁷ American military forces, through security cooperation and FID, can help strengthen legitimate governments and spread democratic ideals. Security cooperation and FID programs of assisting, advising, training, and equipping provide such capabilities as early in the conflict as possible when the threat is smaller and the government’s ability to counter it is more likely. These activities also prevent insurgents from effectively using “the presence of foreign forces as a reason to question the [host nation] government.”⁷⁸ Security cooperation and FID are “sufficiently subtle” to influence and assist the host nation government without eroding its legitimacy.⁷⁹ Such an indirect approach is often the most appropriate and effective means of supporting the host nation.

Improving American Response

Building partnership capacity is primarily designed to be a preemptive action, but it has ramifications far beyond preemption. It “also plays a vital role as operations move to direct support” because American forces are more knowledgeable and better postured to begin with.⁸⁰ As problems develop, prepositioned American military personnel would see a situation’s progression first-hand and have a better understanding of the problem’s root causes. An effective reactive strategy would then be built on an established foundation instead of isolation.⁸¹ Whatever the follow-on reactive strategy, an American long-term presence built through productive relationships and improved partnership capacity could help make the strategy better received and perhaps more successful. Whether preparing for large-scale military intervention or humanitarian support, a firm foundation based on previous relationships and prevailing contextual knowledge would better enable subsequent operations.

The intelligence gained prior to reactive military action is critical to properly employing American forces. If intelligence is critical to preemptive action, then it is equally important during reactive operations. American military personnel would no longer be forced to spend their initial time in country gathering information and establishing relationships.⁸² Much of this would be done before they even arrived, and they could spend their time cultivating this information and these relationships to meet specific mission needs.⁸³ Prior information and intelligence would provide a great springboard for subsequent reactive operations, if necessary, and likely enhance their overall chance of success.

About the Author

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77. Vick et al., *Air Power in the New Counterinsurgency Era*, 84.

78. Army Field Manual 3-24 (Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5), *Counterinsurgency*, 6-2.

79. Bob Killebrew, *The Left-Hand Side of the Spectrum*, (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, June 2007), 7.

80. AFDD 2-3, *Irregular Warfare*, 6.

81. Vick et al., *Air Power in the New Counterinsurgency Era*, 90.

82. Initial FID missions begin with an evaluation role to assess and evaluate conditions.

83. With an integrated and developed long-term presence in the host nation, this portion of a FID deployment becomes less important as there is already a foundational understanding of needs, issues, and capabilities.
